

Pleurocera and that *Lithasia*, including *verrucosa*, was a quite distinct genus. I provided such a report as a service contracted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on rare and endangered species from south-eastern U.S.A. (Davis, 1974).

More recently, Burch, 1978, has produced an outline classification of the Recent freshwater gastropods of North America in preparing a manual for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on North American freshwater gastropods. He considered *acuta* to be the type species of *Pleurocera*.

Clearly it would not be in the service of North American malacological, ecological and parasitological sciences to cause a small switch in names that would create enormous chaos at so many levels of involvement: science, government and the law.

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COMMENT ON THE PROPOSALS REGARDING THE GENERIC NAME *PECTINARIA* LAMARCK, 1818. Z.N.(S.) 2202 (see vol. 34: 112; vol. 35: 18, 25)

By Karl Banse (*Department of Oceanography, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195, U.S.A.*)

I am a polychaete taxonomist just completing the second and final volume of keys for the about 460 species known from the Oregon Biogeographic Province and have, therefore, something at stake regarding the nomenclature of species. Yet my main concern regarding *Pectinaria* is directed at the family and genus level. Here, the arguments in this case centre evidently on the question of priority versus usage. The gist of my comment is to ask that the

Law of Priority be applied as long as it is practical but not if stability of names or usage is threatened. In fact, my principal motive in writing this letter is not that of a taxonomist but that of a biologist who uses names as shorthand descriptions of his objects of study.

Family level: In my opinion no serious difficulties will arise among ecologists and other users of names if the Law of Priority is applied and AMPHICTENIDAE is used as proposed by Dr Holthuis (see also Pettibone, *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 35: 24). I will use it in the key mentioned above.

Genus level: I urge that the generic name *Pectinaria* be preserved and *Cistena* suppressed. Bibliographies, abstracting journals, etc. utilise generic names as the principal entries for unlocking the existing literature, which for *Pectinaria spp.* is quite extensive in regard to ecology, physiology, and also applications (i.e. fisheries biology contrary to Dr Holthuis's remark, *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 35: 19). By suppressing *Pectinaria* but not taking into account the prevailing custom of not citing synonymies in non-taxonomic work, the old literature on *Pectinaria spp.* will, as a means to finding information, become closed to the users of zoological names after *Cistena* had taken hold. On the other hand, the name *Pectinaria*, even if suppressed, would continue to prevail in the non-taxonomic literature for several decades. Species are identified by field workers and physiologists from taxonomic, monographic keys. All the existing keys and handbooks for polychaetes use *Pectinaria*. The labour of preparing a key for an entire polychaete fauna and the poor support of taxonomy ensure that our major keys (about ten for the sedentary polychaetes, worldwide) will not be revised for some time. Thus *Cistena* would for a long time live only for the taxonomists. I therefore do not agree with Dr Holthuis that the 'acceptance of *Cistena* would [not] cause much inconvenience'. Quite to the contrary, it will in my opinion certainly create confusion.

Species level: All of us realise that the choices open to you present very difficult problems. I urge you to decide in such a way that changes of sub-generic names (*Lagis* versus *Pectinaria*, see *Bull. zool. Nom.* vol. 35: 24, 26) will not be a consequence of your decision. I ask this for the reason given above, that the names are a means to an end which is of concern to all biologists and not only to taxonomists.

CONUS FERGUSONI G.B. SOWERBY III, 1873 (GASTROPODA):
COMMENT ON PROPOSED VALIDATION. Z.N.(S.) 2239
(see vol. 35: 189–191)

By W.O. Cernohorsky (*Auckland Institute and Museum, Auckland,
New Zealand*)

I fully support the conservation of *Conus fergusonii*. This specific name is now firmly entrenched in malacological literature, which, however, is not evident from Mr Tucker's citation of nine uses during the preceding 50 years.